

Are Professional Homosexuals Killing the Queer Press?

GayCommunity News

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Feminists on
Sex & Violence:
S/M debate overshadows
another conference



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Bitter Debate Opens Nat'l March Planning

By Bob Lederer

NEW YORK — At a national conference here on November 14-16, activists set the direction for a massive March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights next October. Planning for the march had been underway for over a year by a "March on Washington Committee," representing mostly the more established lesbian/gay organizations, such as the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) and the Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights (CLGR) of New York. The interim committee also included the National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays (NCBLG) and several gay government officials.

Over 400 delegates, representing 180 lesbian/gay and AIDS groups from around the country, attended the conference under the slogan, "For love and for life, we're not going back!" While

there was significant lesbian participation, many delegates were concerned by the small number of Third World people, perhaps less than five percent. Attendance was dominated by New Yorkers and Californians, with sparser representation from other regions. With the exception of New York, it appeared that most delegates were long-time activists, with few new participants. For example, only 13 delegates attended from lesbian/gay student groups.

The weekend was marked by major debates over strategy, leadership and linkage with "non-gay" issues. Procedural wrangles obscured some issues and prevented full debates from occurring. Some delegates were critical of the conference leadership, drawn from the interim committee, for what they considered stifling of debate on some important issues.

However, progressives were encouraged by the adoption of a statement declaring the centrality of fighting racism and sexism, plus specific demands on abortion, sterilization, militarism and apartheid.

The upcoming march, set for Sunday, October 11, 1987, as part of a three-day weekend including lobbying and civil disobedience, will be only the second such march in history. In 1979, over 100,000 lesbians, gay men and supporters demonstrated for lesbian/gay rights in Washington. That march was initially opposed by the major national gay groups, including NGLTF and the now defunct National Gay Rights Lobby.

A long list of demands for the 1987 March was adopted by the conference (see box for highlights). Notable among these

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Highlights of Resolutions Adopted by March on Washington Conference

General Statement

As members of the Lesbian and Gay Movement, we too are affected by rising racism and sexism which oppresses people of color and women; thereby, the liberation of Lesbians and Gays is integrally linked to the struggle against racism and sexism. We realize that "none of us will be free until we are all free."

We, therefore, call upon all of our sisters and brothers to actively confront racism on all levels, both within our movement, and in the larger society.

We demand an end to racist and sexist oppression.

We demand an end to all social, economic, judicial, and legal oppression of people of every race, age, gender, ability, class, ethnicity, faith, political ideology, and sexual orientation.

Demands on Lesbian/Gay Issues

- Repeal all laws restricting sexual conduct between consenting adults
- Pass a federal gay rights law
- Obtain a presidential executive order barring discrimination against lesbians and gay men in the federal government
- Repeal restrictions on lesbian/gay immigration
- Stop violence against lesbians and gays, including practices by police and prison authorities
- Provide a government-funded educational campaign against anti-gay violence & hatred
- Extend heterosexual benefits and rights to lesbians and gays, including child custody, legal contracts and rights of next of kin
- End discrimination against People with AIDS/ARC
- No mandatory HIV testing
- Initiate massive federally funded AIDS prevention, treatment, and education program which is lesbian/gay affirming
- Appropriate money for AIDS, not for war

Demands on Related Issues

- Expand reproductive rights, end sterilization abuse, provide free abortion & contraception on demand to persons of all ages
- Adopt the Equal Rights Amendment for women
- End government oppression of people of color in this country
- End U.S. government and corporate support of South African apartheid; free Black Gay Activist Simon Nkosi and all South African political prisoners.

Testimony on Foster Care Attacks Anti-Gay Policy

By Kim Westheimer

BOSTON — Testimony delivered at a hearing on the state's foster care policy was overwhelmingly in favor of changes supported by lesbian and gay activists.

The December 3 hearing reviewed a draft proposal by the state's appointed commission on foster care which recommended that no "overriding" criteria such as sexual preference be used to determine a person's eligibility to become a foster parent. The proposed change, one of 21 recommendations, also called for placement decisions to be made by individual social workers "who are closest to the case."

The current policy instituted by the Department of Social Services (DSS) a year and one-half ago, makes it almost impossible for les-

bians and gay men to become foster parents. It also discriminates against single people and women who work outside the home.

Jacquelynne Bowman of Boston Legal Services, who was chair of the subcommittee that developed the new placement proposal, told *GCN*, "We can't bar groups of parents based on sexual preference or marital status. The two-parent family is a thing of the past. The Urban League in a 1983 report on the status of Black families found out two out of three children were in single-parent families." Bowman continued, "We don't have the liberty to say we believe in the traditional family when a kid needs love, nurturing and a healthy environment."

Although many of those who

testified commented on a broad range of issues, including recruitment of foster parents for handicapped children and the need for "professionalization" of the foster care system, nearly everyone commented on the placement policy.

Speaking in favor of the proposed changes in the placement policy were representatives and employees from DSS, Boston Children Services, the Gay and

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11-year battle

Pacific Bell Settles for \$3M

By Charles Linebarger

SAN FRANCISCO — The longest running anti-gay employment lawsuit in U.S. history ended in victory December 3. Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company bowed after an 11-year battle, agreeing to establish a \$3 million fund to benefit the plaintiffs in the class action suit. The case had earlier produced a landmark state Supreme Court decision, in May 1979, which established legal protection from job discrimination in California to lesbians and gay men.

"We beat the phone company," said Jean O'Leary, executive director of National Gay Rights Advocates (NGRA) which argued on behalf of the plaintiffs. "We brought the phone company to its knees. The \$3 million dollar settlement will go directly to the gay community. First it will go to the claimants and whatever is left over will go to the Golden Gate Business Association Foundation.

That was our choice. And all gay organizations in California will be able to apply to the foundation for grants."

The settlement agreement is scheduled to be filed with the San Francisco Superior Court on December 4, as *GCN* goes to press. NGRA is trying to arrange a hearing on the settlement for March 5. At that time, a judge will decide whether the agreement is a fair and reasonable settlement of the claims.

Should the court approve the settlement, as O'Leary and NGRA legal director Leonard Graff anticipate, Pacific Bell will be required to place ads in newspapers across the state to inform potential claimants of the settlement's existence. Between December 29, 1986 and January 29, 1987, notices will be placed in the state's major dailies as well as in the gay/lesbian press.

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Just the Facts, Miss Thing

By Marcos Bisticas-Cocoves

Professionalism is in danger of killing the gay and lesbian press. Instead of creating our own ways of reporting news, of telling each other about our lives and the things that affect our lives, we have accepted straight norms. Outrage has given way to diplomacy. We have sacrificed our truths to "objectivity."

This is as true at *GCN* as it is, say, at the *Advocate*. Now, no one at *GCN* would argue that the news can be presented objectively. Some people say the paper should be more of an advocate, others more a record of events, yet I know of no one who says it should be just one or the other.

However, actions do speak louder. Some people expect that the news should be written "professionally," that it should conform to certain "journalistic standards," and that it should not "editorialize." And this is tantamount to saying it should be written objectively, and that we should absent ourselves when writing copy.

Fortunately, we don't always meet those standards. But we do too often, and regardless, the expectation is still there. I believe we should abandon the pretense of objectivity and simply tell our truths.

just the facts, miss thing only the facts

The truth is that we see the news from a perspective. We bring our

experiences, our dreams, and our politics to the news."

The truth is that we make the news, not just report it. The news doesn't simply exist out there, unconnected to our lives. We participate in its creation, in obvious and less obvious ways.

One way is that we are sometimes the people the news is being written about. Most of us at *GCN* were activists before we were journalists. And we haven't stopped being what we were. For instance, there are likely to be people involved with the paper at any given demonstration or rally in Boston. I have covered political actions I have taken part in.

Less obviously, what we choose to write about, who we quote, and what words we choose to use say as much about us and our perspectives as the story.

This is true at any paper. When the *New York Times* uses a clinical word like "homosexual," or refuses to acknowledge a lover in an obituary, it's telling us what it thinks of the gay and lesbian community.

When the same paper refuses to use the title "Ms." and puts news about women on the fashion page, it's being clear about its sexism.

When it covers European politics extensively, but reports on Black Africa only when it obviously affects white interests, it's saying that Africa is not important.

Who is a terrorist, and who is a freedom fighter? Which religions

are cults? These are questions the straight press answers all the time. You just have to read closely.

The problem with this style of journalism, lesbian/gay or straight, is that its values are usually so hidden, its perspective so taken for granted, that it's hard to argue against. And the values it supports are so inculcated in the reader that any reporting that challenges those values looks oddly distorted and somehow wrong.

There is a rhythm to most journalistic language that makes it seem automatically correct. The form not only transcends content, it becomes content.

When I write about any big institution, I'm usually overcome by its language. After talking to government bureaucrats for days, one of two things usually happens. Either I don't understand them, so I assume that they're right. Or I start talking like them. And I end up writing like they talk. I end up spreading the values concealed in their words.

freedom of the press: or, three stories about gcn

When is a blow job not a blow job? When somebody at *GCN* doesn't approve.

A few weeks ago, I wrote a story on the Atlanta gay and lesbian rights ordinance. In that story, I reported that a Georgia woman may have been arrested under the state's sodomy law for giving a

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News Notes

quote of the week

"Half of them just use the toilets downstairs to play with themselves."

— a guard at the Boston Public Library muttering loudly November 30 as library users began to enter the building at opening time. The guard may have been expressing regrets for the passing of the glorious late '70s when the public library was notorious for police entrapment of gay men in the restrooms. For more, see "Toilet Cop Craps Out," GCN, Vol. 14, No. 18.

only 'growing christians' need apply

MINNEAPOLIS — A chain of six Minnesota health clubs has for several years been in violation of state law by refusing to hire anyone "deemed antagonistic to the Gospel's moral standards," namely homosexuals and unwed couples. The founder and president of the Sports and Health Club, Inc., Arthur Owens, has defended his discriminatory hiring policy as an enactment of biblical principles and an upholding of God's standards.

According to the *New York Times*, the Human Rights Dept. began its investigations in 1978 and found that the company was discriminating on the basis of religion. The company argued that their practices of promoting only "growing Christians" to management positions was protected by the constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion.

The State Supreme Court rejected these arguments in May of 1985. But the company refused to change its hiring practices until March of 1986, when a County District Court judge ordered the company to pay fines of \$300 a day until the violations stopped.

To date, the health clubs have paid over \$40,000 in fines. Owen now plans to sell his company, but he and the other operators still face nearly 100 charges of discrimination, according to the State Attorney General.

— Ben Robbins

le high recognizes le lowlife

BETHLEHEM, PA — Official status has been granted to a gay/lesbian/bisexual group by one of the country's most conservative non-religious universities. According to *Out*, of Pittsburgh, the Human Diversity League, which has been in existence for 2 and one-half years, has finally been recognized by the business/engineering-oriented Lehigh University. Official recognition will allow the group to reserve meeting rooms on campus, to have a table at annual activities night, and to apply for funding programs.

— Sharon Haase

dod allows lesbian security clearance

WASHINGTON, DC — The "Defense" Department, in a reversal of an earlier decision, has granted a security clearance to a lesbian doing contract work for the military. Carmela Alfonso, a senior systems analyst for a Northern Virginia firm, was denied the clearance in December 1985 when the Directorate for Industrial Security Clearance Review (DISCR) discovered she was a lesbian.

With the assistance of D.C. gay activist Frank Kameny, Alfonso contested DISCR's claim that she was "untrustworthy" and susceptible to blackmail, according to the *Washington Blade*.

DISCR officials had learned of her homosexuality by examining Navy records, revealing she had been discharged when authorities discovered her lesbianism. DISCR officials also claimed Alfonso was ineligible for a security clearance because she displayed "criminal and dishonest conduct" and "poor judgement." These charges stemmed from the Navy report that Alfonso had lived with another woman, also in the Navy, while stationed in Anacostia. DISCR also said Alfonso could be coerced into releasing important government secrets to protect her lover from blackmail about her sexual orientation.

Alfonso denied she could ever be coerced into disclosing government secrets and said "the accusation became moot" because her former lover had been discharged from the Navy, also on grounds of homosexuality.

Kameny said DISCR retracted some of its grounds for denying clearance and finally withdrew the entire case when Kameny threatened to demand a hearing to contest the denial. Kameny had been prepared to charge DISCR with acting irresponsibly and wasting government funds by denying Alfonso her deserved clearance. Alfonso was finally granted her clearance on October 27.

— Ben Robbins

first meeting of latinamerican dykes

MEXICO CITY — Lesbians here are planning a meeting of Latinamerican lesbians to take place in 1987. The general goals of the conference organizers are to gather together Latinamerican, Caribbean and Chicana lesbian feminists struggling for liberation, to analyze the situation for Latina lesbians inside different countries, and to seek "mutual answers... to our oppression."

Specific goals are:

- "to reinforce our Lesbian identity"
- "to solidify the loose network of Latinamerican, Caribbean and Chicana Lesbian Feminists"
- "to promote Lesbian Feminist art, science... politics"
- "to create a system of support and solidarity for lesbian victims of government and/or institutional oppression (psychiatric hospitals, schools, religions, political parties, police actions, etc)"
- "to build an International Latinamerican, Caribbean and Chicana Lesbian Feminist political movement... [and] to spin off a Lesbian Feminist movement that binds together the third world on a world-wide basis"

The conference will be held three days before the IV Latinamerican Feminist Meeting and will resume after the feminist gathering for two days to minimize expenses for those who want to attend both. Suggestions for the conference of Latina lesbians are welcome. Send ideas and inquiries to L.A.L., Apartado Aereo, 22834, 1400 Mexico, D.F. Mexico.

— Sharon Haase

eunuchs now a 'fallen class'

NEW DELHI — Once the highly respected and influential guards, tutors and entertainers of the king's harem, eunuchs have since become social outcasts in India, according to a recent *Chicago Tribune* article. There are an estimated one million eunuchs living in India. They currently earn a meager living by singing and dancing at family and public functions.

Historically, eunuchs were a class of men castrated in order to guard the king's harem in an era when women were kept in seclusion. Now many eunuchs claim they are born with defective sex organs or have both male and female sex organs. They are reportedly viewed as disgraced members of Indian society.

However, according to Khairati Lal Bhola, a self-proclaimed defender of the eunuchs, nearly 40,000 boys a year are abducted and then castrated by eunuch leaders who keep most of the boys' earnings. Bhola has petitioned Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to arrest exploitative eunuch leaders and to provide financial and educational support for the eunuchs. Bhola said that "a man [who once] came to me was just about to be married, and the gurus kidnapped him and castrated him."

Eunuchs charge Bhola with being a fraud who makes big promises to improve their condition in exchange for money.

Eunuchs, who reportedly consider themselves female, taking women's names and dressing as women, usually live in households of several members under one guru. They pool their earnings and address each other as family members. The Indian press continues to give eunuchs a bad name, carrying reports of eunuchs harassing married couples and little children.

— Ben Robbins

protest military aid to the contras

BOSTON — The Central America Solidarity Association is calling a demonstration to protest U.S. military aid to the anti-Sandinista Contras funded from the sale of arms to Iran. The rally will begin at the Park Street subway station at 4 p.m. on Thursday, December 11. Protesters will then march to the CIA offices on Winter Street.

— Stephanie Poggi

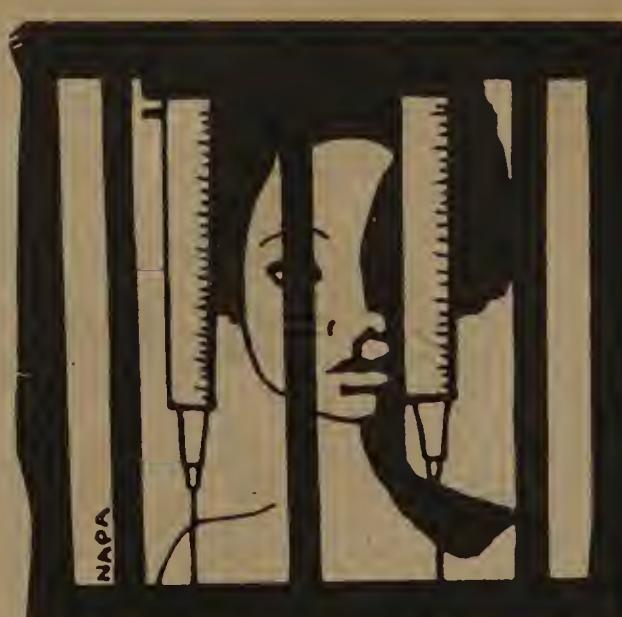
people with aids homeless

MINNEAPOLIS — The number of homeless people with AIDS is rapidly growing here. *Equal Time* reports that many persons with AIDS who lack family and friends also do not qualify for general assistance or Social Security.

In a memo calling for city budgeting for homeless people with AIDS, gay City Council member Brian Coyle stated that many persons "have been evicted by their landlords, rejected by lovers or even family members, or have just come into the metro area from Greater Minnesota for treatment...."

The Minnesota AIDS project sought \$350,000 in funds from the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners for housing, but received only one-third of that amount. Dulcie Hagedon, coordinator of the AIDS programs, said that most of the County's funds go into education rather than treatment and services.

— Sharon Haase



exploding psychiatric myths

NEW YORK — Right on Target — Wimmin's Collective Exploding Psychiatric Myths is a group of lesbian ex-psychiatric inmates working to increase the understanding of psychiatric abuse. As a support group for lesbians in the aftermath of "treatment" and as political organizers, Right on Target challenges concepts of "normalcy" and the authority of "experts" who prescribe shock treatment and "control" drugs such as Thorazine.

Among the issues the group has tackled in workshops and other events are the long-term effects of psychiatric treatment. Neuroleptics, including Thorazine, Stellazine, Haldol and Mellaril, can cause irreversible central nervous system disorders and can damage the liver and kidneys. Shock "therapy" destroys brain tissue and causes permanent memory loss.

The group writes, "We are tired of the experts continually speaking for us and our 'right to treatment.' What about our right to refuse 'treatment?' We'd like to engage the support of the wimmin's community and ask wimmin to examine within themselves their perceptions of mad people, mad womyn, mad dykes and the values that perpetuate those perceptions. Any woman can be incarcerated at some time in her life, and we are all oppressed by psychiatric explanations of behavior...."

To contact Right on Target, write c/o Womanews, Box 21C, 408 West 14th St., New York, NY 10014.

— Stephanie Poggi

gay father goes after robertson

PALM SPRINGS, CA — Gay parent Frank Batey has charged that television evangelist Pat Robertson made "vicious and unsubstantiated accusations" against Batey on the Christian program, The 700 Club.

Batey has received national attention during the last five years as he battled his fundamentalist ex-wife, Betty Batey, for custody of their son Brian. Betty Batey contended throughout the custody hearings that her ex-husband was an unfit parent because he is gay. Frank Batey eventually gained custody of Brian last June.

According to the *Desert Sun*, of Palm Springs, Batey charges that Robertson and his co-hosts on the 700 Club blatantly misrepresented the facts of the custody case on four separate programs throughout 1984. Batey is particularly disturbed by Robertson's charge that Batey had sex with men in front of his son. On the November 2, 1984, broadcast of his show, Robertson declared that, "You have a judge declaring that a child must forceably live with a father who is committing homosexual acts of sodomy in front of his eyes." Robertson also said that there were "men walking naked around the house and open acts of homosexuality."

A spokesman for the 700 Club responded to Batey's charges of misrepresentation, stating that the program was only reporting facts of the case that had been disclosed in court and learned from Brian Batey during a live interview.

Batey said he is determined to present the truth about the case. He has sent letter to 160 television stations across the country, demanding that the stations air his three-minute taped response to Robertson's remarks. To date, only four of the 160 stations have agreed to broadcast his video. Batey said he will file complaints with the Federal Communications Commission against any station that refuses to air his rebuttal. Batey has also written a formal request to Robertson and his network, the Christian Broadcast Network.

— Ben Robbins

Boston Les/Gay Alliance to sponsor meetings on violence Gay Bashing Still a Popular Boston Sport

By Kim Westheimer

BOSTON — In the wake of more gay bashings in the Fenway and increasing reported incidents nationwide of gay-related assaults, the Boston Lesbian and Gay Political Alliance is sponsoring a series of forums on "violence against lesbians and gay men."

The most recent reported attack occurred in the Fenway, a cruising area for local gay men, on October 25. According to a victim who asked not to be named, two teenage boys beat up as many as five men within 45 minutes.

"I've never seen such anti-gay, virulent sick stuff," said the man. The man said he was walking on one of the paths in Fenway park when one of the teenagers put him in a "choke hold... before [I] knew where [he] came from."

After getting the man's wallet, the attackers continued to beat him and kick him in the head, saying, "I'll kill you because you're a faggot." One of the teenagers held a knife to his throat during the incident.

The attack ended when another man walking on the path apparently scared them away by asking, "What are you doing?" The attacked man stressed to *GCN* the importance of confronting someone who is harassing a person in the Fenway. He said the attack on him could have been prevented if another man who was in front of

him prior to the attack hadn't "rabbited out of there."

The man said he discovered while still in the park that four other men had been assaulted, presumably by the same two teenagers.

The assaulted man reported the attack to the police, whom he said were surprisingly helpful. The other four did not report to the police.

The man who was attacked said his assailants were "high school kids." One had blond hair, was short and had blue eyes. The other one he described as being mulatto, thin, and tall, with curly hair. The police report on the incident described the second assailant as "Hispanic." The races of the five men attacked are unknown.

According to Sergeant Paul Corboy, a Boston police officer in Area D, there have been a number of muggings and assaults in the Fenway area since November 30. In two recent cases, men were robbed at gunpoint and assaulted by "a group of four to six young men." In a third incident, a man was robbed but not beaten. Corboy said it is unclear whether these cases were gay-related.

Two other men were apparently the victims of gay bashing since late summer. One man was attacked while leaving a money machine in the Fenway area. According to

French Wall, an aide to openly gay City Councillor David Sondras, this man was so badly injured that he suffered brain damage.

Following the attack, Wall said the man went to Beth Israel Hospital where hospital employees, thinking the man was drunk, kept him out of the emergency room on two separate occasions. The man was eventually admitted and Wall said he is recovering slowly.

Another gay man was assaulted in early August by two men who he met outside the gay bar Sporters. According to the man, who asked not to be identified, the incident occurred as follows: He struck up a conversation with two men who were denied entrance to Sporters because one was underage. Following an amiable conversation on the street, he invited them to his Beacon Hill apartment.

The conversation in the apartment remained friendly until one of the guests asked him if he was gay. The two men said they did not think being gay was normal, "so I tried to change the subject," said the man. One of the men then grabbed him and said, "We don't like fags." One of the assailants beat him with a shelf pulled off the wall. The other one threatened him with a knife.

One of the attackers was subsequently arrested when the gay man told police the name and address

he had seen in the man's wallet. He has not been tried in court. The gay man said he is frustrated with the lengthy nature of court proceedings.

"The increasing evidence of harassment, assault, and even murder of gay men and lesbians makes it imperative for us to become aware that our community is facing a serious problem," said Boston Lesbian and Gay Alliance chair Will Hutchinson. "The solu-

tion is *not* to return to the self-hatred and isolation of the closet, but to truly come out, avail ourselves of the social and legal support systems within our community, and to press civil authorities to protect our rights as citizens."

The Alliance's first forum on lesbian and gay violence will be held on December 8 at 7:30 p.m. in the Piemonte Room of Boston City Hall. For more information call (617) 436-5944 or (617) 267-7413.

Ad campaign slated

Catholics Blast Back at Rome

HYATTSVILLE, MD — Catholics Speak Out (CSO), a network of Catholics seeking "justice" in the church, are organizing a campaign to counteract the Vatican's condemnation of homosexuality and abortion. (See *GCN*, Vol. 14, No. 18) The first action of the network will be a large advertisement in the *National Catholic Reporter*, to appear January 9, 1987.

The ad, for which CSO is requesting additional signatures, will focus in particular on the treatment of Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen of Seattle. Hunthausen, a peace activist, was recently stripped of much of his authority, in part because of his ministry to lesbians and gay men.

The ad calls the action against Hunthausen a "scandal" and urges that he "be restored to full authority." It also denounces the Vatican statement on homosexuality and the threatened dismissal of nuns who signed an ad in the

— *Stephanie Poggi*

Nat'l March Planning

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were: repeal of all "sodomy" laws; passage of a federal lesbian/gay rights law; ending anti-gay practices by immigration, police and prison authorities; extending heterosexual benefits and rights to lesbians and gay men; ending discrimination against people with AIDS/ARC; no mandatory HIV testing; massive AIDS research, treatment, and education funding.

A major controversy throughout the conference was whether the 1987 demonstration would maintain a "single-issue" approach to lesbian/gay rights as the 1979 march had. The results, after some intense battles, were mixed. A direct attempt to declare the march a single-issue event and to preclude "non-gay" demands was defeated twice, each time by about a 3-2 margin. Proponents argued that bringing in issues of racism, sexism and U.S. intervention in the Third World would "divert the focus" from gay concerns and "alienate" potential conservative supporters. Opponents of the single-issue approach countered that all these issues are closely linked. They maintained that showing lesbian/gay support for other strug-

gles would actually allow march organizers to broaden participation, both within the lesbian/gay community and among potential allies, particularly Third World people, women, and anti-war activists.

On the first night of the conference, Gwendolyn Rogers of NCLBG presented a resolution by the interim March Committee declaring that racism and sexism are "integrally linked" to lesbian/gay oppression and must be fought on all levels. The resolution called for this statement to appear in all march literature and guide all further planning and outreach.

When conference leaders attempted to have this passed without debate, there were widespread protests about lack of democratic procedures. After extended and sometimes heated discussion, the leadership agreed to guarantee open debate for the entire conference, and the racism/sexism resolution was passed by a wide margin. Some delegates charged that the leadership had attempted to push through a general symbolic statement as the conference opened in an effort to stave off serious attempts to implement it or

adopt specific demands on racism and sexism.

In its concluding resolutions, the conference voted almost unanimously to include a demand for free abortion and contraception on demand, and an end to sterilization abuse. A demand proposed by the Lesbian and Gay Network of Mobilization for Survival (MOBE), calling for "Money for AIDS, not for war," was unanimously adopted. With little dissent, a resolution sponsored by the

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Foster Care Hearing

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Lesbian Defense Committee (GLDC), the State Association for Professional Foster Care, Mass Advocacy, Local 509 — a social worker's union, and the Department of Public Health. The Massachusetts Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) issued a written statement which commended the commission for its "boldness in revising the placement policy that severely limits applicants from becoming foster parents based solely on their marital status or sexual preference."

Sue Hyde of GLDC invited Dukakis "to publicly apologize to our community which he so maliciously attacked 18 months ago." The policy, she said, is "injurious to foster children, insulting to social workers and inhumane to gay men, lesbians and single people."

Vincent McCarthy, who described himself as an openly gay public figure in the city of Boston, gave a personal account of his three children's reaction to the foster care placement policy. "My children tell me they internalized [the homophobia] for a period of time," he said. Then they thought of the love they received from their parents, he said, and they realized that there was nothing wrong with having a gay parent.

Only two people spoke against the proposed change in placement policy. Father Craig, a commission member who also represents Catholic Charities, asked the commission to reaffirm the state's current policy.

Craig told *GCN* that social

workers should always work first with a child in the family setting, even in cases of "battered and abused children." Craig would not say whether he was completely opposed to lesbian and gay foster parents and said the issue required more "research, and study in the public forum." When that discussion takes place he said, "I will take the lead for the family as the place of recruitment for foster parents."

A former foster mother, Nora Kabeartas, testified that the "most normal" setting for a foster child is a "family unit with a mother and father."

Although the commission's placement recommendation differs greatly from current policy, some members of the commission attempted to down-play the differences. In the opening statement of the hearing, commission chair Joseph Leavy said, "We understand that one of the key reasons this hearing is so well attended, and has drawn so much publicity is because of a single recommendation. Namely, the foster care placement policy. We do not consider this draft recommendation to be revolutionary, nor do we consider it to be especially contradictory to the existing policy."

"All of the recommendations were drafted with the hope that there will be an improvement in the lives of the 6,800 children now in foster care," continued Leavy. "It is unfortunate that these good recommendations are being overshadowed by an interpretation of the recommendation covering the placement policy.... It is our best

projection that any placement of children in gay or lesbian foster homes actually represents less than one-half of one percent of the 6,800 children in foster care."

Leavy said his statement was not an attempt to back off from the commission's stand on the placement policy. He said it was an attempt to help people "see more common ground" on the issues. The common ground, he said, is that the current as well as the proposed placement policies "talk about the best interests of children." By framing the issue more neutrally, he said, he hoped to "take some emotion away from decisions about how you place kids."

"I guess it's what he [Leavy] has to do to get [the placement] recommendation passed through the political gauntlet," commented Sue Hyde of GLDC. "It's probably a pretty strategic move."

Leavy, as well as commission members Tibbets and Bowmen, were upset by the media's portrayal of the placement policy as a way to recruit lesbian and gay foster parents. A headline in the Newburyport *Daily News* about the proposed foster care policy read, "Bringing Children to the Gay Community."

Such coverage is "irresponsible and outrageous," said Tibbets. "It's sounding like we're on an affirmative action plan for gay foster homes. We're saying we're looking for good foster homes. We're not looking to recruit in the gay community any more than the straight community."

Pacific Bell Loses

Continued from page 1

There are 250 claimants in the class action case as of early December, though that number is expected to rise in the coming months as news of the settlement spreads.

According to the settlement agreement, plaintiffs who claim they were treated unfairly before September 1, 1980, will be entitled to the "rebuttable presumption" that they were discriminated against by Pacific Telephone. September 1, 1980, is the date when Pacific Bell instituted its own policy barring discrimination based on sexual orientation.

The suit against Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company was filed in June of 1975. The case began when two gay men complained that they had been discriminated against because they were gay. One man was turned down for a job when the interviewer learned that he was gay. The other individual was harassed

and forced to leave his job when co-workers learned that he was gay.

NGRA later discovered that Pacific Bell had a specific policy, approved at the highest level of company management, forbidding the employment of "manifest homosexuals." The company rejected gay applicants, labelling their job applications, "Code 48 — Homosexual."

The case went to the California Supreme Court in May of 1977, resulting in a landmark decision of May 31, 1979. The high court ruled, said O'Leary, "that all gays and lesbians in this state are protected [from employment discrimination] by the California Labor Code."

"This is the biggest award that the gay community has won in a case like this by far," added O'Leary. "How many people can challenge the phone company and win?"

Community Voices

white jews and people of color

Dear GCN:

I am writing in response to Sara Karon's remarks about Jews and white skin privilege in her review of *The Tribe of Dina*, (August 24-30, 1986). She writes: "I do not consider myself white, nor do many of my Jewish friends; I am a Jew. The label 'white' is as false as the label 'straight.' Just as I do not enjoy heterosexual privilege once people know I am a dyke, neither do I enjoy white privilege despite appearing white, once it becomes known I am a Jew."

What struck me about her statement is the inherent assumption that the only people whose perceptions matter about who Jews are, are white gentiles. Karon does not address what happens when white Jews come into contact with people of color and "it becomes known" that they are Jews. Would people of color no longer perceive them as white? When I am in this situation, I instead understand that these particular white people also face systematic oppression, that is anti-Semitism, based upon their identity, culture, and religion, but that they remain white in relationship to me and other people of color and also benefit from the privileges that white skin grants them in U.S. society.

I was pleased that Nancy Bereano raised some very valid questions about Karon's approach to a highly complex issue in her letter to the editor (September 14-20, 1986).

Sincerely,
Barbara Smith
Albany, NY

thanks to sue hyde

Dear GCN:

As her co-workers on GCN's Board of Directors, we want to thank Sue Hyde for her ongoing contribution to GCN and wish her the best for the future.

To the not-always-appealing task of fundraising for GCN, Sue brought enthusiasm, optimism (reminding us that even a \$15 profit on a fundraiser is a profit!), and an endless supply of creative ideas (we're still working on the concept of a porn fest, Sue). Sue also provided much more than her share of exquisite munchies and hearty laughs. The Board will never be the same.

Good luck Sue. We're not saying goodbye, we're saying *auf wiedersehen*.

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Send resumes to GCN Circ/Writer Search, 167 Tremont Street, Boston, MA 02111.

Lesbians and gay men of color are particularly encouraged to apply.

missouri: more abuse in "protection"

Dear GCN:

I'm a GCN reader and am in the "Protective Custody" [isolation] unit here and it is a sad situation indeed! Our food is regularly urinated and spit on and we are taunted as 'fags' and 'punks'. After objecting to a guard spitting on my food he gave me a disciplinary report and I got a sentence in the "special management unit" where you are not only isolated, but your personal property is taken.

The guard I am suing has said he is going to "get that son of a bitch." I hope you'll print this letter and anyone interested in why prisoners in protective custody are subjected to abuse will write the superintendent and ask him to look into this. They don't like public attention on their backroom pranks. Your letters can be directed to: Jimmy Jones, Superintendent MTC, Box 7, Moberly, MO 65270. I filed a grievance concerning my food being tampered with and the response was that I "instigated" it; meaning that it's ok for the workers to abuse the prisoners if they "ask for it."

Thank you for your help,
Bill Pullin
Box 7 (2-B-407)
154784
Moberly, MO 65270

woo continues to fight

Dear GCN:

I'm responding to Jeffrey Ruda's letter to you (GCN 9/28-10/4) regarding your article on Merle Woo's termination from UC Berkeley.

Mr. Ruda focuses on the merits of temporary lectureships and alludes that Woo was just a victim of an overcrowded job market. Merle Woo's fight against UC Berkeley continues to be one against discrimination and for free speech on the job. The first time she was fired from UC, Woo was able to win reinstatement because of broad, public support. She fought on the issues that she was fired because she was a lesbian, a socialist feminist, a trade unionist, a woman of color and supportive of student rights. And she won because of these issues.

Even though UC agreed in its settlement with Woo that it would not discriminate against her, UC has done just that. Woo was paid from a self-terminating fund in the Chancellor's office, even though she was a visiting lecturer in the School of Education. Lecturers usually teach one standard class with student contact and one field studies class with limited student contact. Woo was assigned to teach two field studies courses. The majority of lecturers are reappointed, based on the merits of their teaching. Woo received favorable review from her colleagues, yet was denied reappointment. Furthermore, when Woo filed a grievance against UC, she was denied access to the grievance procedure because she had won a settlement.

Woo continues to fight and gather support for her reappointment. Her victory against UC in the first round provided inspiration to working people throughout the country. This is round two of the same fight, over the same issues. For more information about Merle's fight, and how you can help, contact the Merle Woo Defense Committee at 5121 Miles Ave, Oakland, CA 94618 or at (415) 864-1278 or 334-1853.

In struggle,
Nancy Reiko Kato
Oakland, CA

the right to defend the military

Dear GCN:

In Richard Cleaver's "Speaking Out" piece, November 16, 1986, he first says that of course Ellen Nesbitt, a lesbian struggling to stay in the military, should have equal rights, but that we (lesbians/gays) should not support the military by our presence. In fact, he states, "For those of us who see that the system is unjust and harmful, our energies are wasted if we restrict them to getting ourselves included."

Waste energies??? Who died and made Richard Cleaver Ruler of the Universe? Disbanding the military may seem like a worthy cause, but it is not an exclusively lesbian/gay cause. Many, many groups and individuals have come to support the idea, for various noble reasons and good intentions. (Personally, I can think of about a million things wrong with the U.S. military establishment today. But that's my political opinion. It has nothing to do with being straight or gay.)

But equal rights means rights for everybody. The right to support the government and the right to protest against it; the right to be "out" and the right to pass; the right to fight what someone perceives as a classist, racist, sexist, homophobic, over-bloated military and the right to defend and serve in it.

No one is entitled to set priorities for everyone. It is simply not good enough to say, "We'll disband the military; then they won't discriminate anymore." Either Ellen Nesbitt is entitled to equal rights, or she is not. It's as simple as that. Jan R. Fielding

Boston, MA

GCN prints all letters to the editor except personal attacks. Carbon copies of letters sent elsewhere are only printed on a space-available basis. Letters should be TYPED and DOUBLESPOCED and limited to five typed pages. Send to Community Voices, GCN, 167 Tremont St., Boston, MA 02111.

GayCommunityNews

cover design: ina cohen

cover illustration:

Women Behind Bars

Gay Community News is produced by a collective dedicated to providing coverage of events and news in the interest of gay and lesbian liberation. The collective consists of a paid staff of eleven, a general membership of volunteers, and a board of directors elected by the membership.

Opinions reflected in "editorials" represent the views of the paid staff collective. Signed letters and columns represent the views and opinions of the authors only. We encourage all readers to send us comments, criticism, and information, and to volunteer and become members.

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Speaking Out

Bigotry is a Disease

By A. Gayle Birk

The disease AIDS is blamed for having originated within homosexual communities. Controversy prevails as to who contracts AIDS from whom and how. The fact of the disease has divided even more severely the "straight" community from the "gay" community. A good question is: "Where does any contagious disease originate?" Some will undoubtedly answer: "From God," though I cannot conceive that people in this century truly believe that a loving God condemns so cruelly.

But, this piece is about another disease. One that does not destroy flesh, only spirit. And, though you do not actually contract the disease, the carriers often transmit its stigma.

This disease is bigotry. At this moment there are several definitions in my mind: bigots are snobs. They despise those who are less wealthy. Bigots revile those whose skin pigment is different than their own. Bigots say with alacrity, "You go to the wrong church!" or "You don't go to church." Either way your soul has been condemned to burn in hell.

Bigotry is definitely a disease, but the "carriers" do not die from it. Their existence is based on transmitting it to others. Ironically enough, bigots might have said to some others: "I love you," then became aware that you are not who they think you are, visualized you to be, *demanded* that you be. Ah ha! When the Truth is known, you are no longer you. The bigot's mind has changed you from loving, kind, and happy into a pervert. Slime among The Chosen Ones. And, in the eyes of said bigot, you, my dear, no longer exist.

And, believe me folks, these words are not written from hearsay, but from *very* first-hand knowledge/experience. One who felt the decline of strength and truth within because I had spoken my truth — the truth — of who I am. I was called names more vicious than *any* human being deserves by those who wore their goodness like shields and mouthed their love for God and His/Her creatures. By those who read the Bible daily, who sit in church each Sunday and feel tears on their faces when The Word is spoken.

Reading the words I quote here touched me more than any other since my having been declared a non-person. Perhaps had I read them sooner, I could have avoided a great many tears, moments of anger and regret.

"...to put your life into words is to risk having the supports cut out from under you."

Isn't this a sad world we live in? It is unless we want to make it happy. How does one make a happy world? Such a big world. We look around and watch hundreds of people — in their cars on the freeways, at ball games, the theater, the grocery store, at parties, etc. And, one thinks: "Oh, Jesus, how could I ever begin making this gargantuan world happy?"

My answer is: "Within yourself." Not by comparing yourself with others. We *must* look within. If inside is *not* a happy place — world — change it. Only you can. No one else can do it for you. I had been looking "without" myself rather than "within" and found only confusion and contradiction because of bigots who think they have the right to set the standards suitable for *my* world. This is certainly not to imply that circumstances "out there" cannot or will not make us mad, sad, glad. They can and they will if we are interested, caring mortals. But, to allow those circumstances to guide us, rather than attempting to

change them, will never allow us to be happy within and, certainly not, outside ourselves.

I allowed myself to be knocked for the loop of all loops when I authored a book that revealed, quite graphically, the fact of my lesbianism. I lost some members of my family. "What is a family?" I asked. Ideally, a family consists of people with whom you are "blood kin" — your mother's brothers, sisters. Your father's sisters, brothers." Grandparents, siblings, et al. After my book was published I wanted "blood kin" to know "me of me," not what I once thought I was, what I was looked upon as being. So in ignorance, or perhaps innocence, I revealed the "who of me" in my autobiography.

Innocence has a number of connotations. After an innocent does something for the first time she is looked upon as having lost her innocence, be it having sex, reading a dirty book, going to church, learning to play poker, kissing a frog. "Now she knows" precludes innocence.

No matter how "bad" any of us have been or will be in our lives, we *all* will leave this earth with a measure of innocence. None of us will have "done it all." There isn't enough time no matter how much we choose to play in the fast lane.

So, in *my* innocence I put my "naked self" out there before those who thought they knew me. I made them aware of my book and advised: "You might not like it, but I want *you* to know the real *me*." Well, my dears, those family who had kept in touch through the years, who said and signed, "I love you," will have nothing more to do with me. Those people do not, will not, understand that I am still who I was before they learned I am not as they thought I was, or who and what they are. They will not accept the fact that "we," too, offer love, kindness, our concerns, just as "they" do, or do not. I want to be loved for the goodness, the badness, the whatever that makes me unique, as we are *all* unique.

"Pity the judges." I have forgiven mine because if they cannot love me for what I am, how can they expect to be loved for who they are? There is not time to judge, only time to love, forgive, and attempt to make a better world "within" and "without." Hopefully both.

A. Gayle Birk resides in Houston, Texas.

"Speaking Out" is part of our continuing effort to provide a true forum of opinion for the community. We encourage you to send your ideas, feelings, and comments to us and we encourage you to respond to any ideas expressed in this space. Submissions to "Speaking Out" should be TYPED and DOUBLE SPACED, and, if possible, held to under 5 pages in length. The GCN staff collective reserves the right to limit length and number of signatures in "Speaking Out." The opinions expressed in "Speaking Out" do not necessarily reflect the views of the newspaper, the staff, or the advertisers. Write c/o Speaking Out, GCN, 167 Tremont St., 5th Fl., Boston, MA 02111.

Community Voices

harder than the steel that encloses them

Dear GCN:

GCN is like a letter from home for some of us (who don't get letters from home). In this system you can see the proudest and most daring of our youth and the most undefeated of the poor being ground down into social submission and criminality until they are harder than the steel that encloses them. Mike, believe me, it is hard to be 'strong and sweet' [GCN Prisoner Project sign off phrase] in here. Most of us have lost our families for being gay and our friends for being 'criminals' and are paying in here for what these rednecks aren't able to do to the gay community as a whole. They can take their frustrations out on us and get away with it.

The holidays are coming up. If you would write

down a prisoner's number and address and send a card, it might be the only one he or she receives. Thank you. I will 'stay strong and sweet' if I can, Billy Baucom
717555—Box 121
PO Box 158
Lowell, FL 32663

dis-invite the pope

Dear GCN:

I'd like to suggest your participation in a grassroots statement to The Vatican and Pope John Paul II in response to his Letter on the Doctrine of the Faith condemning homosexuality.

What I'd like to suggest you do is send a post card to Pope John Paul II dis-inviting him from his American Tour in 1987.

If you recall his statements here during his last visit, when a woman in the Church asked him to address the lack of women priests, you'll remember that he told women there was no place for them in the priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church, nor would there ever be.

If you recall his statements during his visit to Nicaragua, he condemned the government that was acting as his host and openly called on the people and the Church of Nicaragua to rebel. He admonished the Roman Catholic priest that was working within the government, telling him he had no place in politics. That's not a rule that John Paul II himself follows, he is much more at home in politics than in bringing comfort to the poor and needy.

If the Pope is allowed this visit, homosexuals will unquestionably be the target — he has been gearing up for this battle with his perception of the enemy of the Church. Remember that he sent

the infamous 11-page letter of condemnation just before the 1986 elections, when California voters were faced with the LaRouche Initiative and, in some cities, attempts to overturn gay rights protections.

Send a post card to the Pope telling him to stay home. Writing to the Pope is easy, the official address is:

The Pope, John Paul II
Vatican City
Italy

An airmail postcard costs 33 cents (if you write a letter, it's 44 cents for each half-ounce). Write to your local gay and non-gay publications suggesting the same tactics. Xerox this letter (remove my name and put your name at the end) and send copies to your friends. Who knows, we might even put the fear of God into the Pope!

Very truly yours,

T.R. Witomski

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Interested Members Urged to Take More Responsibility

Elder's Group Hopes to Expand Services

By Gordon Gottlieb

About 40 people ranging in age from their twenties to their seventies and eighties got together for the LEGACY Thanksgiving potluck on November 25. Between an impressive turkey buffet and the games of bingo, members of LEGACY—which stands for Lesbian and Gay Aging Cycles—reflected a bit on how far the year-old organization has come and in what direction it might head from here.

A year after its founding by Ann Maguire, Boston Mayor Flynn's liaison to the gay and lesbian community, LEGACY's primary ac-

tivities revolve around a weekly drop-in night alternating between a Cambridge and a Boston site and a monthly potluck dinner held in Cambridge.

Out of these largely unstructured social gatherings have come a higher visibility for older gay men and lesbians in the community at large, as well as a new network for friendships. For LEGACY member Mary Hobbs, the potlucks are important because she has an opportunity to socialize with women and men together. "Except for LEGACY, I have no contact with men. I want to be part of a large community, especially with AIDS." Another LEGACY member, who maintains that his existing circle of gay friends already satisfies his social needs, acknowledges that he has met other retired nurses with whom he can share a particular bond.

For some of its members, LEGACY is the first gay and lesbian organization they have ever joined, although they have participated in other organizations for older people. One gay man said this combination of gay/lesbian and older people's issues is a mixed

blessing. "Is gaydom the reason for joining, or is it because we're elderly? I don't know. There are more younger people here than older. Who is this organization for?"

Whom LEGACY is designed to serve and how this can be achieved are just two of the major questions people raise about the group's function and role in the Boston-

area community. Another gay man, comparing LEGACY to its New York counterpart, SAGE, expressed concern about what he termed the group's aimlessness. Potlucks are not sufficient, he said. Daytime discussion groups for men and for women, guest speakers, organized trips, and a daytime drop-in center are what's needed. Direct services for the

sense of privacy are crucial for LEGACY's success, a centrally-located, secure daytime facility could draw in people who are excluded from an organization, however important, that meets only at night.

Maguire readily concedes these problems and says the acquisition of a permanent meeting space—either at the proposed gay/lesbian

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THE SPIRIT AND THE FLESH Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture

Walter L. Williams

A fascinating new book that tells the story of the American Indian *berdache*—males who do not conform to a society's expectations for masculine behavior and dress. Native Americans often respected *berdaches* as sacred people, honoring them with special ceremonial roles as healers, shamans, and seers. Walter Williams is the first outside observer to participate in both the public rituals and private lives of *berdaches* in various tribes, and has written a landmark study of the history and character of these androgynous people.

"A major contribution to our understanding of Native American cultures as well as to the burgeoning history of sexuality."

—Martin Baum Duberman
Lehman College,
City University of New York

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University of Washington

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THE SPIRIT AND THE FLESH

Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture



Walter L. Williams

Walter Williams will sign books at
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homebound, such as visits and meal delivery, is the way to go, said Steve Levy, a social work student.

Alternating between Cambridge and Boston meeting places disrupts any sense of continuity, another lesbian pointed out. And since personal safety and a strong

community center or elsewhere—would address many of these concerns and allow for more programs and services to be offered. A long-term dream, says Maguire, is to set up a shared living space for gay and lesbian elders, as has been

Continued on page 12

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AIDS Benefit Celebrates the Life "Toujours Gai"

Gay Man's Dream Realized in Benefit Production of "archy and mehitabel"

archy and mehitabel. Book by Mel Brooks. Lyrics by Joe Derion. Music by George Kleinsinger. Directed by Kevin Fennelly. Choreography by C.B. Hetherington. Set design by Craig Carter. With Joey Brandon, Susan Davis, Joe Cianciarulo, Paul Stickney, Craig Carter. At the Penthouse Playhouse, Berkeley St., Boston.

By Michael Bronski

It's just another typical musical comedy love story. He loves her, she loves life, he worries, she has affairs, but in the end they both come to accept one another and go off into the sunset. Well, not quite the sunset because they live in *Shinbone Alley* — a fairly disreputable part of any city — and not quite hand in hand: after all, he is a cockroach and she is a cat. If the romantic liaisons of a cockroach with intellectual aspirations and an alley cat with the morals of, well, an alley cat, seems like an unlikely basis for a musical — you're right. But *archy and mehitabel* is as likable as it is unlikely.

archy, the roach with poetic pretensions and his *amour mehitabel*, first made their appearance in 1916 when newspaper man Don Marquis wrote about them in his column for the *New York Sun*. Actually that first story, and all of the succeeding ones, were written by *archy* — a cockroach with such a need for self-expression that he hoisted himself onto the typewriter keys every night and dove headfirst onto key after key, to pound out his stories. (That is why all of the poems are lower case — he might have better luck these days with a word processor.)

Somewhere in the early '50s *archy and mehitabel* became a one act jazz opera, and in 1957 Mel Brooks, along with original author Don Marquis, adapted the story —

now called *Shinbone Alley* — into a two act Broadway musical starring Eddie Bracken and that fabulous feline Eartha Kitt. That was almost 30 years ago and the roach and cat are back again in a revival of the Broadway show, this time under the original title *archy and mehitabel*.

Let's sidetrack for a moment from the history of the show to the history of this production. Last July Joey Brandon, a 26-year-old actor who has been active in Boston theater for the past years, was diagnosed as having AIDS. Never one to buckle under he decided that he was going to work on his life-long ambition of producing and starring in a production of *archy and mehitabel* — a show that he had loved since childhood. The theater community rallied around him and this production is the result of their work together.

Although theater, and show business in general, has been hard hit by AIDS — the obituary writer for the *Hollywood Reporter* claims that one third of all deaths in the industry are now AIDS-related — there are still strong prohibitions against people with AIDS coming forward. That Joey Brandon was able to do so is an act of courage in itself; that he was able to get so much support attests to the strength of his friendships and to the understanding of the Boston theater community.

But what is it about the romance — and a fairly unhappy romance, at that — between a bug and a cat that would attract a fledgling queen. Gay images are hard



Don Marquis (Joe Cianciarulo) flanked by archy (Joey Brandon) and mehitabel (Susan Davis), and the rest of the cast in the Absolute Productions presentation of *archy and mehitabel*.

enough to find when you are an adult — almost impossible when you are a child. Somehow it is much easier to convey the emotions of gayness — the feeling of outsideness — through anthropomorphism.

Gay poet and limerist Edward Lear uses animals and creatures perfectly this way. (Reread "The Owl and the Pussycat," with Lear's non-gender-specific illustrations, to see how effective he is. And then read "The Jumbies" to see how heartbreaking he can be.) Even the Muppets — as mainstream and heterosexual as some of them may be — are favorites among many gay men; Miss Piggy, that porcine sex-kitten, adorns many a wall in gay bars. Look at Mr. Toad in *The Wind in the Willows*, such a silly,

pompous queen, and even Randall Jarrell's *The Animal Family* has a lot to say about non-human and non-nuclear arrangements.

archy and mehitabel is in the same tradition. Here we have a bookish cockroach — probably the most despised of household creatures, an outcast who spends most of his time worrying about his best friend, and love interest, mehitabel. mehitabel describes herself as *toujour gai* — archy worries that she is 'too' *toujours gai* — and although she likes to live *la vie bohème*, she is always getting dumped by her gentlemen friends, and pushing the outer limits of her ninth life a little further. *Archy and mehitabel* is about love and respect, but also about the dichotomy of roles which are assigned to people in our culture — the

thinker and the doer — and how we have to appreciate both of them.

When *Shinbone Alley* appeared on Broadway it failed after 49 performances and it's easy to conjecture why. The show is too small, too intimate for a large theater. It relies upon tone and nuance rather than big productions and gaudy sets. That is probably why the production at the Paramount Playhouse works so well.

Director Kevin Fennelly has presented the show as a small revue; it is not afraid to come too close to the audience. The jazz score is low key — the whole show feels sort of '50s Greenwich Village, with the exception of the *noir* narration — and fits perfectly into the tone of the production. As mehitabel, Susan Davis gives a great performance; blousy and buoyant she manages to make this cat of the night both lovable and a little callous. For the first weekend director Kevin Fennelly took the role of archy (Joey will resume it for the rest of the run) and he tapped, with what seemed to be all six little legs, and danced with more energy than his namesake ever put into pounding the keys.

archy and mehitabel is a great little show. It is charming without being cloying, moving without resorting to bathos. Its first rate score is well sung and performed, and best of all its heart is in the right place.

All proceeds from *archy and mehitabel* will go to benefit AIDS research at the Deaconess Hospital.

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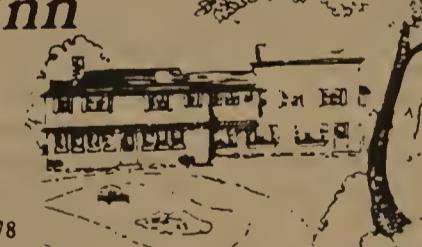
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Discord in the Happy Valley: Report of a Conference



By Margaret Hunt

The debate over lesbian sado-masochism, and the related controversy over how feminists should respond to pornography has been going on now for almost five years, and it shows no sign of being on the wane. From October 25 to October 30 more than a hundred feminist activists met at Mount Holyoke College for a symposium entitled "Feminism, Sexuality and Power," intended, in the words of the conference brochure, to explore "the variety of ideas about the ways that sexual practices are affected by history, culture and politics" and to provide an opportunity to "challenge and broaden the way we think about sexuality."

Originally, it seems, the conference organizers had had in mind a quite broadbased approach to the problem of sexuality and power. They planned a program which included a substantial amount of material on the ways class and race interacted with gender in the organization of sexuality, and they took special care to represent a variety of erotic lifestyles and to avoid the prevalent Western bias of much scholarship on sexuality. What they got was a pitched battle over the question of lesbian s/m, an issue which so dominated the conference as to make all other matters fade into the polished neo-gothic Mount Holyoke woodwork. It was a pity, because there were several excellent papers which pointed to broader questions relating to sexuality and power (Hazel Carby's "The Construction of Black Women as Sexual Subjects in 1920's Blues Lyrics," Barbara Miller's "Devi the Goddess: A Sexual and Contextual Analysis of an Indian Film") and several which genuinely did seek "to challenge and broaden the way we think about sexuality": Joan Cocks' "On Power, Desire and the Meaning of the Body," a discussion of heterosexual eroticism which drew on radical feminist and lesbian approaches to the study of sexuality; Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's "Spanking and Poetry: Starting with Fundamentals," a lyrical exploration of anal eroticism, and Gayle Rubin's "Sexuality: Conceptual Considerations," a witty and scholarly recapitulation of her own and other scholars' recent thinking on the history and anthropology of sex.

Why should the apparently sectarian issue of lesbian sado-masochism monopolize feminists' attention to such a degree that, at this conference at least, it became virtually impossible to talk about anything else? The reason is that the s/m debate is a focus for a number of more basic conflicts that go to the heart of what the women's movement means. The "Feminism, Sexuality and Power" conference was a disappointment in terms of illuminating the subtler connections between eroticism and power, or of suggesting creative ways to end the real human tragedies caused by the collision of sexuality with the disproportionate power to coerce enjoyed by the state, men, heterosexuals, whites, employers, and adults. But it was useful too, because it clarified the larger implications of the anti-s/m position in ways that haven't been done before.

The anti-s/m group is largely coterminous with that wing of the movement which favors, in principle, some kind of censorship of pornography. This amalgam of persons and groups was variously referred to at the conference as "radical feminists" (their favored term for themselves), "the anti-pornography people," "the anti-sex group" and "moral purity feminists." For the purposes of this discussion I am going to call them "radical feminists," though as one who has long considered herself a radical feminist, I want to come right out and say that I am profoundly disturbed by many of the positions these new "radical feminists" are now taking as their own.

As I suspect is true of a lot of women, including feminists, my reaction to porn varies. Some of the "soft-core" stuff I find titillating, but I often find myself alienated from what tends to be its heterosexist bias — one of the reasons I'm strongly in favor of lesbian sex magazines. On the other hand movies, books, etc. which

make a cult out of killing and coercion not only offend me but fill me with outright fear and loathing. I'd put porn that focuses on killing and coercion in the same league, though I'd have to say that in terms of impact, films like *Rambo* reach a lot more people, including children, than the very small percentage of sexually explicit material that is comparably violent. Were I in favor of censorship, (which, for a variety of reasons, I'm not), it would be much more along the lines of the course taken by a number of European countries, regulating images of senseless, anonymous, repeated killing, without regard to whether they purportedly take place in the context of sex or a Cambodian jungle.

As a woman who has been involved for the last decade in one way or another in the battered women's movement, it is true that I am especially sensitive about representations, pornographic or not, which portray women as victims of violence or which suggest that as a group we invite violence or coercion. I have participated in boycotts of record companies, complained loudly about violent portrayals of sex,

teenth century. In the West this mode of thought emerged as the result of a complex confluence of trends, among them the rise of the science of sexology, the appearance of distinctive sexual subcultures (specifically male homosexual subcultures), and the need to legitimate a range of new repressive measures aimed at working-class populations (and especially working-class youth) in major European and American cities. We tend to associate this mode of thought primarily with the persecution of gays (a good example is the belief, common in the armed forces, that homosexual acts sap a soldier's ability to fight; another is the argument that lesbianism leads naturally to suicide). But, in fact, feminists, lesbians and gays can all too easily slip into this cause-and-effect method of reasoning as well.

One of the major questions raised by the s/m controversy is how good a reflection of reality this habit of thought really is. Of course s/m raises these issues in the starker possible way. If someone gets off on playing the dominant role in a sex act, is it not reasonable to harbor a suspicion that such predilections might influence their

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and once, about ten years ago, I even helped heave a concrete block through the plate glass window of a store whose management had refused to remove displays featuring bruised and bloody female mannequins. But I didn't do any of these things because I thought the sole or major source of male oppression was sex acts, pure and simple, or their representations. Even ten years ago when I was much more of a separatist than I am now, it was obvious that the story was a lot more complicated than that, and that to attribute oppression so single-mindedly to a particular style of sexuality was not only diversionary but potentially very divisive for the movement as a whole.

Like a lot of feminists my basic attitude toward lesbian s/m over much of the last decade has been unenthusiastic. I never condoned kicking people who did those things (whatever they are — I wasn't sure) out of the movement, probably because I was reluctant, as a fairly "out" lesbian, to engage in labelling other people as perverts. But I was troubled by the dominance/submission dichotomy in s/m and unsure about whether or not it could be reconciled with feminist egalitarianism. I was definitely open to the suggestion that indulging in bondage, whipping, etc. indicated some kind of character flaw that would make it difficult to function well in a feminist setting.

But gradually I began to get more and more uncomfortable with the anti-s/m position. My objections were both personal and theoretical. The personal ones revolved around the frequently-heard claim that women who engaged in s/m were condoning violence against other women. First of all the women who did "those things," some of whom I had known for years before they "came out" as sadomasochists, seemed like every-day feminists in other respects. Some were involved in the shelter movement, including people I have worked with for years and whose work I respect immensely. Some worked in rape crisis centers, some had been active for years in programs relating to low-income women, some were among the earliest feminists to push for women's studies. Like any feminist cohort they included women who were incest-survivors, women coping with the problems of single motherhood, and women trying to cope with sex or race discrimination in the workplace. Just going by the kinds of sacrifices I knew some of these people had made to our movement over the last two decades, it seemed crazy to accuse them of condoning violence against other women. It also seemed profoundly wrong to imply either that they had never been victimized sexually or otherwise by men, or that their experience of that victimization was automatically less authentic, that their suffering, disorientation and trauma was less than that of other women, because of the very separate issue of the sorts of fantasies they indulged in consensually in the bedroom. (I also know of some people who have been told that they are unable to distinguish between violent abuse and s/m because they were victims of sexual abuse at some time in their lives: an even more insulting assumption.)

The second area of discomfort was theoretical, and it had to do with my own research into the history of sexuality. The belief that particular sex acts "cause" other kinds of acts, that they have a special power to shape social mores, is a very recent one, not shared by most of the peoples of the world, nor even by most Westerners before the late nine-

other human relationships? Reasoning like this is familiar, comfortable even, but it does not square with reality. There are connections between what people do in the bedroom and what they do in the rest of their lives, but these are far more complex and paradoxical, even contradictory, than this line of reasoning suggests. Personally I believe that the explication of these connections is an important project for feminism, but both feminists and lesbians need to be wary of assuming simplistic or over-literal correspondences between consensual sex acts and personality types, politics, or social mores. These are approaches which have proved deeply problematic for us in the past.

Subtlety of thought with respect to the connections between sex acts and the rest of reality was not much in evidence from the radical feminist side at the "Feminism, Sexuality and Power" conference. For these people it was axiomatic that heterosexuality itself bore a large part of the blame for women's oppression in society (the same kind of reasoning I've just been describing writ large). This is something more than the old "Feminism is the theory, lesbianism is the practice" kinds of slogans some of us used to throw around in the early- to mid-seventies. The new radical feminist cosmology not only equates all or almost all heterosexuality, even between two consenting adults, with rape (the assumption being that women are being coerced into it even when they think they are doing it of their own free will) but tends to see heterosexuality (i.e., rape) pervading the whole of reality. All the world's a stage, according to this view, on which is being enacted a kind of gigantic cosmic rape scene. There is a never-ending dialectic between heterosexuality and all other oppressive acts in society: the bedroom defines, legitimates and perpetuates "hetero-patriarchy" (as one panelist, Julia Penelope, called it) in a horrifying cycle of sick fantasy, rape, violence, and victimization.

The main problem with this view is the exaggerated emphasis that it places on sex acts in explaining women's oppression. For these people economics, culture (apart from representations of sex), socialization, reproductive issues, have all faded into the background. Race and class barely exist for them at all as analytic categories. Political action around these issues is at best diversionary and at worst merely collaborating with "hetero-patriarchy." As feminists we should be focusing our energies primarily on

Feminists and lesbians need to be wary of assuming simplistic or over-literal correspondences between consensual sex acts and personality types, politics or social mores.

on Feminism, Sexuality and Power

eliminating or purifying sex acts, and, by extension, sexual fantasies, as in this system erotic fantasies are as potentially damaging, and play as central a role in the construction of the cosmic rape scene as do the sex acts themselves.

For the radical feminists at Mount Holyoke the task was three-pronged: 1) purifying the movement of people who do s/m; 2) instituting some kind of censorship of pornography, a project which included getting rid not only of *Hustler* and others of its ilk but also best-selling lesbian-feminist publications such as *Bad Attitude* and *On Our Backs* which allegedly fill women's minds with the desire to perpetuate violent criminal acts on their sisters (i.e., they sometimes print s/m porn), and 3) convincing currently heterosexual women to stop participating in their own oppression by continuing to have sex and/or orgasms with men.

The attack on s/m was led off by Janice Raymond, feminist author and director of the Women's Studies program at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. The gist of her remarks was that lesbian s/m recapitulates and reinforces the oppressive structure of the society. And not just any oppressive structures but the very worst. Frequent analogies were made, for example, between lesbian s/m and Nazism, much to the distress not only of some of the people in the audience who did s/m (including several who were Jewish), but of a prominent feminist historian of the Holocaust who happened also to be attending the conference. Raymond's panelist, Julia Penelope's speech focused on what was to become a recurrent theme of the conference, the accusation that the s/m community, and indeed the whole "pro-sex" a.k.a. "Libertarian" faction, was insensitive to the victimization of women and girls as represented in the sexual harassment of children, rape, battering, and the like. Penelope was particularly incensed by the fact that Gayle Rubin, the previous night's keynote speaker and a prominent spokeswoman for lesbian s/m, was known to be in favor of loosening legal constraints on non-coercive intergenerational sex. In Penelope's view this translated into support for (or at least criminal insensitivity toward) the sexual exploitation of children.

Not a simple issue to be sure, as anyone who has followed the recent feminist thinking on incest, as well as the man/boy-love debates, knows. Personally I oppose the abolition of constraints on intergenerational sex because I don't believe the rape laws work well enough to be an adequate replacement for them. On the other hand I am uncomfortable with the way existing laws are predicated on the belief that "normal" children are incapable of sexual feeling or subjectivity. I am aware that over the years this legal principle has been used to label thousands of children (particularly heterosexually active adolescent girls, but also homosexual adolescents of both sexes) as "deviant" and to justify institutionalizing them. As I've said, it's a vexed issue.



For Julia Penelope, however, the issue is crystal clear, because she believes that in the case of children who engage in sexual acts with adults it is ultimately impossible to demonstrate whether or not coercion took place. The distinction between coercion and consent which is central to the juridical meaning of rape is meaningless in a situation where one of the two actors possesses all the power and the other possesses none, where one actor is totally dependent upon the other for her day to day survival, sense of self, and sense of being loved. I found Penelope's analysis of incest quite compelling, but her larger point, that lesbian s/m was merely the sexual abuse of children in disguise struck me as about as convincing as the argument that long-time feminist-activists who engaged in s/m have the same mindset as Nazis. Leaps of logic like these only make sense if one really believes that adult women who choose to be at the bottom in an s/m exchange are equivalent to children, while their tops are equivalent to pathological murderers.

The pivotal issue here is consent, and whether "real" consent is ever possible in patriarchal society. For those who engage in s/m the issue of consent is absolutely central. It is the presence of consent which legitimates the acts that in a different, nonconsensual context would be oppressive, degrading and criminal. S/M is something which is freely chosen by people fully in command of their facilities. Conversely, for people who want to argue that lesbian s/m is essentially identical with, or in some way promotes criminal

For people who want to argue that lesbian s/m promotes violence against women, it is important to refute the idea that true consent, real free choice, can ever really exist in the world.

lusion of having some choice.

Hearing this I suddenly found myself offering up a little prayer of forgiveness for (almost) every uncharitable thought I ever had about straight women. Jeffreys is proposing to treat them as despicably as our heterosexist society has treated lesbians and gay men. My next thought was, what happened to the "old" radical feminist emphasis on free sexual expression? reproductive choices? What happened to our respect for powerful women of the past? Our sensitivity to the ways all kinds of women, gay and straight, Black and white, rich and poor, young and old, have in small and large ways subverted the system? But of course, there is no free choice in this world-view. Consent is an ontological impossibility. Free will is an illusion.

Being an historian my thoughts naturally fled back to the past, in this case the sixteenth century: John Calvin in the small Swiss city of Geneva. There is no free will, no free choice. Nothing you can do will save you. Everyone around you except the tiny group of the elect is irrevocably depraved and destined to burn in hell. You can know who the elect are by their certainty that they are the chosen of God and by the resolute purity of their lives. And I thought about Calvinist Geneva, policing the sex-lives of its citizens, persecuting prostitutes and fortune tellers, instituting severe judicial penalties for children who defied their parents, and justifying these authoritarian policies with the argument that since people had no free choice in the great and hopeless struggle with sin (read "patriarchy") they needed to be saved from themselves, if necessary by death.

I used to support some kind of censorship for the most violent kinds of pictorial images: rape porn for example, or films that focus on repeated, obsessional killing, whoever it is being killed. I still wish there was some way to get the worst stuff to just disappear quietly. But I wouldn't trust Jeffreys with a censor's scissors (or more likely court orders)

The belief that particular sex acts "cause" other kinds of acts is a very recent one. In the West this mode of thought emerged as the result of a complex confluence of trends, among them the rise of the science of sexology, the appearance of distinctive sexual subcultures (specifically male homosexual subcultures), and the need to legitimate a range of new repressive measures aimed at working-class populations in major European and American cities.

acts of violence against women, it is important to refute the idea that true consent, real free choice, can ever really exist in the world. According to this line of reasoning both sadists and masochists are guilty of false consciousness. They think they are free agents in the world when actually they are caught in the same patriarchal, power-mad trap as everyone else. If the world is ever to be purged of this, lesbians who do s/m will have to be purged too.

Later on in the conference this same line of reasoning recurred with respect to heterosexuality. According to Shelia Jeffreys, English feminist activist and author of *The Spinster and her Enemies: Feminism and Sexuality 1880-1930* (1985), heterosexual women think they are freely choosing to sleep with men, and some of them are even so deluded as to reach orgasms with men. But in actual fact they are completely without choice, victims in a totalitarian world organized by men. It follows from this, Jeffreys went on, that when a woman reaches an orgasm with a man she is only collaborating with the patriarchal system, in Jeffreys' phrase "eroticizing her own oppression." The solution to this is a propaganda campaign aimed at convincing heterosexual women that orgasms are bad unless they are with other women. And not just any women, but women who have agreed to totally purify themselves in thought and deed of patriarchally-inspired roles (e.g., butch/femme) or any breadth of dominance-submission (e.g., s/m). Jeffreys then went on to say that birth-control was merely a tool of patriarchy, designed to paper over the excesses of male hetero-domination and give women the il-

any more than I would Jerry Falwell. The argument that there is no free choice in the world is never all-inclusive. It always admits of the existence of a small group which is morally superior to the corrupt mass. Typically this small group of the elect is deeply reluctant to ally with any other groups and it prefers, if possible, to separate itself off from the rest of society. It conducts periodic purges of its own ranks to ensure its continued purity. And it characteristically resorts to authoritarian measures. Because the world is so fundamentally corrupt in thought and deed, because no one is free anyway, personal liberty is meaningless and there is no necessity for respecting it on the way to the revolution. What people read, what they do in bed, how they think, are all fair game.

The conference was winding down. Sheila Jeffreys had just finished her endnote address "Eroticizing Women's Subordination: Sexology from Havelock Ellis to Gayle Rubin" and was entertaining questions from the floor. One woman asked, with an air of uncertainty, what had happened to the issue of personal freedom. Hadn't the right to choose, especially around things like sex, once been kind of basic to the feminist movement? Jeffreys' response was that once you grasp the fact that heterosexuality is pivotal to women's oppression you must also realize how irrelevant issues of free choice really are. She concluded flatly, "Personal freedom is not the sort of concept that would fit into my view of what we can do around sexuality."

At least we know where we stand, I thought. And then I thought: This is not my revolution.



Conference to Plan March on Washington

Continued from page 3

National Association of Black and White Men Together (NABWMT) was passed, demanding an end to U.S. corporate and government support for South African apartheid and the freedom of South African political prisoners. A specific call was made to free Black gay activist Simon Nkodi, one of 21 anti-apartheid organizers now facing treason charges.

A demand presented by the People of Color caucus for "an end to government oppression of people of color in this country" was adopted by a large majority, but only after a second part of the proposal, demanding an end to U.S. intervention throughout the Third World, was narrowly defeated. The resolution referred to Central America, the Caribbean, Southern

Africa and the Middle East. Debate was not allowed and the vote to defeat was 90-70. The next day, the issue was raised again, generating furious debate, but discussion was cut off before the People of Color delegates could speak. The resolution again lost by a similar margin.

James Credle, a Black gay activist and co-chair of national BWMT, told *GCN* he was disturbed by the defeat of the resolution. "The rejection raises serious questions of who understands what about the people of color community. To take such a stand [against the resolution] is to reject the heart of what people in our community see as committed struggle. We see a strong connection to our homelands." Credle added, "Racism and territorial

patterns are a crucial part of what makes [white] Americans American. They see struggles in the Third World as distant, yet they think Third World people need to be led by them. At the same time, they disavow connections to the rich resources in those countries and the monopolies still there...they've reaped the benefits."

A recently-formed New York group, DAFFODIL (Dykes and Fags Fighting in Our Own Defense and for International Liberation), which co-sponsored the resolution, also expressed concern about the rejection. DAFFODIL member Michelle Dumont said, "While it's 'safe' to be against apartheid, anti-racism, anti-intervention, women's, and anti-nuclear movements. Steve Rose of the Lesbian and Gay Network of MOBE said, "We should use this march to begin to assemble not just a united lesbian and gay movement, but also a coalition with other progressive movements."

little too challenging. We have to work hard to counter the rightward move in the gay community, which only reflects the general trend in this society."

People of Color Caucus members were also outraged by the rejection of their proposal to sponsor a conference of Third World lesbians and gay men in D.C. on the weekend of the march.

An outreach proposal was adopted calling on the march to "establish contingents in order to encourage participation by other movements and communities." Among those suggested were anti-apartheid, anti-racism, anti-intervention, women's, and anti-nuclear movements. Steve Rose of the Lesbian and Gay Network of MOBE said, "We should use this march to begin to assemble not just a united lesbian and gay movement, but also a coalition with other progressive movements."

Another major struggle occurred over the location of the march's national organizing office. The interim March Committee, based in New York, proposed the office be there. New York advocates pointed to the large number of experienced organizers and available volunteers in the area. A resolution was then proposed to shift the site to Washington, with the premise that D.C. was where the demonstration would occur, and there were also skilled people there.

Progressives at the conference

split on the issue, questioning the extent to which each location would allow for domination of the march by large "established" and less militant groups like NGLTF in D.C. and CLGR in New York. Another issue was where Third World people would have the most input, given the headquarters of NCLBG in D.C., and several Black lesbian/gay groups in New York. By a vote of 109-105, Washington, D.C. was chosen.

Grass-roots local activists won an important victory with a decision to grant local organizing committees autonomy from the national structure. In addition, a provision was adopted requiring the National Steering Committee to have gender parity and 25 percent participation by people of color. Progressives viewed this provision as especially important. On the other hand, by a narrow vote, lesbian separatists were denied one of the guaranteed seats for constituency groups, which were granted to youth, elders, veterans, transvestites, S/M activists and others.

A resolution was passed calling for civil disobedience two days after the main march. Organizers discussed blocking entrances to the Supreme Court to protest the *Hardwick* decision. A proposal by New York's Lavender Hill Mob, a direct action group, to call on march participants to stay in Washington and disrupt the city until President Reagan met with them, was narrowly defeated.

Continued on page 12

FROM THE LAND OF THE MARGARITA AND THE MARIACHIS, THE NACHO, THE TACO, AND THE MACHO...



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Is Professionalism Killing the Gay Press?

Continued from page 1

blow job. By the time the issue went to the printer, this had been changed to "performing fellatio."

Well, maybe some male homosexual somewhere performs fellatio, but the faggots I know give blow jobs. One person I know read the story and didn't know what fellatio was, but knew what a blow job is.

My choice was deliberate. I refuse to use clinical, anti-sexual language to describe something near and dear to my mouth. I refuse to use big words where little words will do. That might not be professional, but it's good reporting.

Second story: When I first started working at *GCN*, a friend told me he didn't read the paper because "it tells me what to think." I thought, well, I'm doing my job well. It's good when *GCN* makes its bias obvious. It lets the readers know where the writer stands. Our very obviousness lets people disagree.

But when we are clear about our perspective, we catch hell. Third story, less of a story than a series of examples. People are selectively concerned with objectivity. We could have said anything about the recent Supreme Court sodomy

decision and gotten by; we consistently attack the Centers for Disease Control with no complaint. Yet, if we're critical of the local pride march committee, or the mayor's liaison to the gay and lesbian community, or the local AIDS service organization, we're attacked for our bias.

People seem less concerned with our objectivity than protecting their turf. They seem less concerned with protecting our community than protecting gay bureaucrats. They seem less concerned with incisive reporting than reporting what is harmless and uncritical of their politics.

against professionalism

As the gay and lesbian community has grown, so have its publications. Reporters who were once part-time volunteers are now full-time staff. Activists have become careerists. People on the edge and in the street have become comfortable behind the word processor. And we have suffered as a result, for the gay and lesbian press has lost its celebration and its anger.

We are in the age of the professional homosexual. Professionalism is boring: it has lost the humor

that helped lesbians and gay men survive in hard times. It is suspect: its smoothness can hide what roughness makes clear.

I want to hear a thousand voices. I want to see reporters who don't necessarily "write well," but whose voices have a strength and vitality rarely heard these days. I want to have a paper of the outcast, not the assimilating. I want to build a new paper to go with the new world I dream about, not a paper modeled after an oppressive example.

I don't want to be the voice of authority. I don't want readers to be mere consumers of knowledge. I want to empower people, entertain them, shake them up.

Writing should be clear, and clear about its perspective. It should tell the truth but tell it in a way that engages. Boring stories are counter-revolutionary.

It should advocate, yet not degenerate into rhetoric. It should be out of our lives, not out of a book. It should respect our complexity, and not degenerate into simplicity, including the simplicity of the professional. If our analysis is simple, the point is to criticize its failure, not argue for an end to analysis.

We should introduce the writer in stories: let people talk about how they experienced an event, or the attitudes they've observed in people they are writing about.

We should drop categories like "news analysis" and "news commentary" because it is all commentary anyway.

We should recognize stories for what they are: made up. We should allow the author to introduce the styles of fiction into reporting.

We should drop newspeak in favor of queerspeak: the ways different gay men and lesbians really communicate. Stories fashioned after journal entries, letters to

friends, conversations.

Finally, we should end the distinction between news and features.

We must make the news the record of all our lives. But how can we tell about ourselves if we pretend not to be there.

Correction

The story on women weight-lifters in last week's paper incorrectly identified the woman in the accompanying photo as Ruth Slater. Our apologies to Ruth and to all our readers.

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Elder's Group

Continued from page 6

established elsewhere in the U.S.

While some LEGACY members have been happy with the way LEGACY has functioned so far, others have been urging Maguire to involve more people in the planning and decision-making. Maguire sees 1987 as a transitional period when interested members will be urged to coordinate programs and activities. "People's interest in this has gotten stronger and that's real good." Planning will get underway in January.

This month's potluck dinner will be held in late December at the Council of Elders building on Pearl Street in Cambridge. The date has not been set. LEGACY events are listed in the GCN calendar. For more information about the potlucks or drop-in center, call Ann Maguire at 725-4907.



Ellen Stub

Mary Sault (l) and Ann Maguire at the LEGACY Thanksgiving dinner, November 25.

March

Continued from page 10

As the conference concluded, several proposals from workshops were deferred for later action by the National Steering Committee, elected regionally by the delegates. According to Steve Ault, long-time activist and Steering Committee Co-Chair, the next steps will be establishing the national office, developing the wording for demands, and writing literature. The next Steering Committee meeting will be on January 17-18 in Los Angeles. Regional organizing conferences may also be held next year to build for the march.

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Volunteers needed to edit copy, answer correspondence, perform general office tasks. Time commitment: 2 hrs weekly minimum. Weekdays & Thurs. and Fri. nights; possible take home work. Call Lie, 426-4469. (C)

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INDEXER NEEDED

Our "title index" (list of story titles) is falling behind. If you'd like to come by and help update it, call Mike at GCN, 426-4469. It's fun! (looking at back issues). (C)

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hour from Boston. Call Peg: 603-883-7555. (24)

L40 & 2 cats seeks mat. resp. woman to
share spacious somerv apt. 1st flr of
hse wash dry in hse. Conv to Port &
Davis Sq. T. Available Dec or Jan 275+
util. No smkrs & no mr pet. 625-4298. (22)

INMAN SQUARE

2 LF seek 3rd for Inman Sq. row house.
\$220+ util. Want coop household,
sense of humor. Non-smoker preferred.
Available now. Leave message for Liz:
354-8371. (22)

Seeking LF to share furn 2 bdrm apt in
Boston. Near T. Pkg avail, laundry, pool,
garden. Must be neat/resp. No
smokers/pets. \$375 incl. heat. 536-0147.
(22)

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hshd in JP. Must be communicative &
resp. Prefer 30+. We live in Victorian
mansion with 4 frplcs, 8 ft windows,
huge rms. Nr Jam. Pond. 300+ util.
524-7390; 522-3538; 522-8786, or
524-4892. (22)

Roommate wanted. Over 25 compa-
nionable gay male to share clean,
modern home in quiet neighborhood
with GWM 48. No smoke, drugs. Pet
OK. Minimal rent. POB 262 Franklin,
MA 02038. (21)

Woman to share spacious, quiet, sun-
filled 2-bedroom apt. By park. Pro-
vidence East side. \$250. Stella
401-781-9026. (21)

Female roommate Providence area.
House nr. bay. Furnished bedroom.
Shared kitchen. Parking. Nr. bus line.
\$50/wk, incl. utilities. Jo Ann
401-781-9026. After 8PM. (21)

Share our home in Somerville! 2 apts: 2
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LR, DR, Mod. KT + BR — \$1100. Sep.
util. F + B Porch. Nice yard. Bsmr.
Near T. LF owned. 628-1006. Leave
msg. Avail. Jan. 1st. (21)

MEDFORD NEAR TUFTS

2LFs sk 3rd woman 25+, veg., no smk.,
shr. food & some meals. Have cat, no
dogs. On qt st., prkg., W/D, yard. 300+
heat. 395-9021. (21)

2 LF sk 3rd for newly est. big sunny
newly renvtd. JP apt. Yard & porch. Nr
T. Want to create warm, feminist home.
No smk pls. For ASAP. \$250+.
524-7959. Day, Leslie, 273-1700 x 4359.
(29)

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LESBIANS

Are you lesbian, Bisexual or unsure? Looking for a group to go to? Come join us at BAGLY. Call Tony, 497-8282. (V14,32)

PROJECT TRUTH/FREE WILL

Info packet on police abuse of gay teens, and ways it can be stopped. 1 yr membership \$20. Info \$2 (for postage & printing) to: Project TRUTH/Free Will, PO Box 244, Paramus, NJ 07653-0244. (14,9)

MAN/BOY LOVE

A support group for intergenerational relationships. For more information send \$1 to: NAMBLA-GCNAD at 537 Jones ST. NO 8418, S.F. CA 94102 or PO Box 174, New York, New York 10018. (V15,23)

CONCORD MEN'S GROUP

A support group in Central N.H. for Gay and Bi-sexual men on Fri. at 7:30 pm. For more info, call Gay Info-line of N.H. at (603) 753-9533. (V14,18)

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Prisoners Seeking Friends

TO ALL THOSE WHO IN AND OUT OF PRISON FIGHT AGAINST THEIR BONDAGE (Alexander Berkman, Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist)

NEW YORK PRISONERS!

If you are having censorship problems due to the new ruling about books from publishers only, send info about it to: Viles/Winner, c/o Rabinowitz & Boudin, 740 Broadway, NYC 10003. (They're suing NY DOC and need evidence!)



Whatever your feelings about the various solstice holidays, it's a VERY LONELY time for people in prison. It's a time when some kind of 'message' would be deeply (in the tummy, honey!) appreciated...



Listen up! What's the problem out there? I have answered 3 penpal letters from outsiders and then got no answer back! I don't understand these games. If you're not going to be a penpal at least write back and say so. I'm looking for a lasting friendship. Please write. Eddie CARRERAS, 79A3268, 135 State St., Box 618, Auburn NY 13024.

GM 30, good sense of reality, need a friend to share some conversation with. Please include the enclosed poem in your next prisoner poetry section. [PrisProjNote: OK; it's good but long; it starts out: How can I make you understand incarceration? Should I say endless haircuts that shame even the most audacious punk rocker, as con barbers reflect on last night's blow job...] Charlie WILLIS, 333526, Ellis 2, Huntsville TX 77340.

GEORGIA PWA'S

If you are a prisoner with AIDS you may be able to get early parole. The parole board just gave a man (Easstep) a parole due to a heart problem. You can suit for discrimination if they refuse. [Tip received from James L. Cannon, Box 129759, Reldsville GA 30499.



Lonely Black inmate seeking correspondence with anyone who cares to write. Billie CLOMAN, 919593-IMU, Box 520, Walla Walla WA 99362.

Half-Indian and half-Irish with a satisfying 9". Please write Donald McBENGE, 263643-IMU, Box 900, Shelton WA 98584.

I don't care for bars or baths. I'm sort of a home type person, like to come home shower with my honey, wash each other from head to toe, prepare our meal, watch tv, cuddle up etc. I'm versatile, romantic and like to sleep naked at all times. Please write. James BROWN, 87543, Camp J-A-1-L-13, Angola LA 70712.

My family has shut me out from their lives because of my sexual preference. I wish to put an ad in your paper. You don't need to send me a copy because I read my roomy's all the time. Thanks. Tommy GRIFFIS, A-279963, Box 1100-1716, Avon Park FL 33825.

I want to relocate with someone special that I can love. My hobbies are art, antiques, dress designing, sunbathing and pleasing the special one in my life. Nellie SCHOONOVER, 160087KS-Box 411, PO Box 8540, Pembroke Pines FL 33024

I would like to subscribe to the Gay Community News and be in the penpal list. My interests are dancing, cooking, swimming, sports, and mature love making. Please write soon. Shunta McGRADY, 605570-Box 9, PO Box 8540, Pembroke Pines FL 33024

I'm 38 and enjoy candlelight, fires in the fireplace and music. Write and share yourself and your space in the world with me. Free world women only please. Janice AGUILAR, 911003, Box 17, Gig Harbor WA 98335

I like cooking, poetry, sewing and music and I'm searching for correspondence from openminded people. I'm quite lonely for mail. Dishunda HODGE, A160130-Box 148, PO Box 8540, Pembroke Pines FL 33024

Friendship provides shelter from the buffeting storms of life and the complexities of life situations. By penpalling, both can exchange thoughts, feelings, ideas, ideals and knowledge. Such an exchange promotes fresh insights and personal growth for both insiders and those in the free world. Please let's talk. Richard DuBOSE, 186-915, Box 5500, Chillicothe OH 45601.

A note, a postcard, even a bill would encourage me, for I know that someone has me on their mind. Mail is rare. A letter from another prisoner would be nice too. I'm a candid, firm and slender guy. Kim L. EMIG, 159973, Box E, Jackson MI 49204.

Black and single, interested in meeting any and all. Color doesn't matter. For friendship, fun, love and possibly marriage. Jimmy Lee WRIGHT, 300613, Box 16, Lovelady TX 75851

I want to meet and correspond with a transsexual (not a TV; a passable prep-
op TS who's a woman trapped in a man's body). John E. MOSS, 60432, Box 7450-H16, Trenton NJ 08628.

I've been reading my friend Sunshine's GCNs and find them very interesting! Please put me on your pen

CALENDAR

December 6 to December 25

6 saturday.

Boston — "Hot, Horny & Healthy — Eroticizing Safer Sex," a workshop. Arlington St. Church basement. 1-4PM. \$5. Info: 437-6200.

Boston — **Audre Lorde, Kate Rushin & Rosario Morales** to read as a benefit for Kitchen Table Press, Sisterhood in Support of Sisters in South Africa, and *Sojourner*. Morse Aud., 602 Commonwealth Ave. 7:30PM. \$7. Info: 661-3567.

Boston — Zen Arcade, an exhibit of photography by **Dennis Brady**. The Boston Ramrod, 1254 Boylston St.

Boston — "archy & mehitabel," a jazz musical to benefit AIDS research. 58 Berkeley St., The Paramount Playhouse. 8PM. Info: 492-7933.

7 sunday

Boston — "Women for Women," acoustic music & storytelling. Tower Aud., 621 Huntington Ave. 7:30PM \$4. Proceeds benefit the Women's Scholarship Fund at MassArt. Info: 739-0794.

Dorchester — GALA Holiday Potluck. 7:30PM. Red Line Market, 49 Mather St. Bring food or beverage. Info: 288-8029 or 825-4463.

Boston — Ionian Society, a group for gay & lesbian people of Greek heritage, holiday potluck. 4PM. Info: Stephanie, 894-8363 or Helena, 625-3172.

Boston — Bill Norris, song stylist, in a benefit for Black & White Men Together. Playland Cafe, upper lounge, 21 Essex St. 5PM. \$3 donation.

8 monday

Boston — GCN membership meeting & potluck. Help critique the paper and plan its future. 167 Tremont St. 6PM. All welcome. Info: 426-4469.

Boston — Committee on Gay & Lesbian Issues of the National Association of Social Workers speakers training. 7:30PM. Info: 227-9635 or 625-2609.

Boston — Lesbian & Gay Political Alliance quarterly meeting: a forum on violence against lesbians and gay men. Piemonte Room, City Hall. 7:30PM. Info: 436-5944.

Cambridge — Boston Bisexual Women's Network. Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 7:30PM. All women welcome. Info: 776-6692 or 566-1567.

9 tuesday

Boston — "Boston Against AIDS," AAC benefit with Grace Jones, Sheena Easton, Girls Night Out and more. The Metro. 9PM. \$50. Info: 437-6200.

Boston — "Say It Sister," with host Kate Rushin. WMBR 88.1 FM. 7-8PM.

Boston — John Boswell: "Sin & Crime, Christian Morals, Tradition & Secular Law," a reply to the Supreme Court and the Vatican. Boston Univ., Morse Aud., 600 Comm. Ave. 8PM. Info: 353-9808.

Marblehead — North Shore GALA Holiday Party. Rosalie's Restaurant, 18 Sewall St. 7:30-11PM. \$5 NSGLA members, \$7 non-members. Info: 745-3848.

Cambridge — "Should I Make It a Gay Holiday By Coming Out?" a discussion for women. D.O.B., Old Cambridge Baptist Church, 1151 Mass Ave. 8PM. Info: 661-3633.

Cambridge — Healing Service for all affected by AIDS. Old Cambridge Baptist Church, 1151 Mass. Ave., Harvard Sq. 7:30PM.

10 wednesday

Boston — Community Networking Breakfast. Presentations by 1987 Pride Committee. Club Cafe, 209 Columbus Ave. 8AM. Info: 436-5944.

Cambridge — Lesbians 35+ discuss "Living With Yourself." D.O.B., Old Cambridge Baptist Church, 1151 Mass Ave. 8PM. Info: 661-3633.

Boston — AIDS Mastery Seminar introduction to 3-day workshop for people with AIDS, ARC, and their friends. Boston Actor's Institute, 731 Harrison Ave. 7PM. Free. Info: Jeff Blank, 267-5900.

11 thursday

Cambridge — Lesbians choosing children discussion. Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 7:30PM. Childcare available. Info: 354-8807.

Boston — Seminar on "crack" for the gay/lesbian community, with Alan Tweedy & Ann Maguire. UMass-Boston, Arlington St. campus, rm. 222. 7:30-9PM. Info: 542-5188 or 725-3485.

Boston — GCN's production night. All welcome. Proofreading: until 8PM. Paste-up: 8PM-on. 167 Tremont St., near Park & Boylston T-stops. GCN: 426-4469.



Kate Rushin, 6 saturday

12 friday

Watertown — AIDS Mastery workshop. New England School of Acupuncture, 319 Arlington St. \$100-\$250 donation (no one will be turned away for lack of funds). Info: Jeff Blank, 267-5900.

Boston — GCN's volunteer night: all welcome to help mail the paper to our subscribers. Refreshments, good times. Anytime after 6PM. 167 Tremont St., near Park & Boylston T-stops. GCN: 426-4469.

Watertown — AIDS Mastery workshop. New England School of Acupuncture, 319 Arlington St. \$100-\$250 donation (no one will be turned away for lack of funds). Info: Jeff Blank, 267-5900.

Cambridge — *Eyes of the Birds*, film drama on Uruguay's political prisoners. YWCA, 7 Temple St. 7:30PM. \$3. Also Sat. & Sun. Info: 625-9279.

Cambridge — GAMIT party. GAMIT Lounge, 142 Memorial Dr., bldg. 50-306. 9PM. Info: 253-5440.

Boston — Forum on the broader perspectives of human rights, sponsored by the Women's International League for Peace & Freedom. Emmanuel Church, 15 Newbury St. 7:30PM.

Amherst — Dance sponsored by the UMass Lesbian, Bisexual & Gay Men's Counselling Collective. Campus Center, 10th Floor. 9PM-1AM. \$3. Cash bar. All welcome.

13 saturday

Cambridge — "Being Single during the Holidays," a discussion for lesbians. D.O.B., Old Camb. Baptist Church, 1151 Mass. Ave. 8PM. Info: Jean, 277-8150.



Boston Gay Men's Chorus, 14 sunday

Boston — Gay Professional Women's Holiday Party. Computer Museum, Museum Wharf, Congress St. 8PM. GPW members free. Guests: \$14. For women only. Info: Christine Burton, 328-5685.

Boston — Sechaba Singers, of the African National Congress, perform traditional music & dance. Emmanuel Church, 15 Newbury St. 7:30PM. \$6. Wheelchair accessible. Benefit for ANC & All People's Congress. Info: 424-1176.

Cambridge — Benefit dance for the San-chin Karate School. 595 Mass Ave, 4th floor. 8:30PM. Karate demonstration at 9PM. Info: 666-0916.

14 sunday

Boston — Boston Gay Men's Chorus holiday concert. Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, corner of Huntington Ave. & Gainsborough St. 3PM. \$10, 8, & 6. Sign language interpreted. Info: 536-2412.

Boston — Chemical-free Party (no smoke, no alcohol) to benefit macrobiotic scholarship for people with AIDS & ARC. International Institute, 287 Comm. Ave. 6-10:30PM. \$12. Info: 266-0314.

Cambridge — Black & White Men Together Yuletide Party. Phillips Brooks House, Harvard Yard. 1-5PM. Potluck lunch (no alcohol please). Free. All welcome. Info: 426-5472.

Boston — "Thinking About Pornography," a slide show to benefit Linda Marchiano. Clarendon St. YWCA, rm 707. 4PM. \$5. Info: 437-0421.

16 tuesday

Boston — New England Gay & Lesbian Veterans Christmas party. Hill House, 74 Joy St. 8PM. All veterans & their friends welcome. Info: David, 871-1509(days).

Boston — "Say It Sister," with host Kate Rushin. WMBR 88.1 FM. 7-8PM.

Boston — "Before Stonewall," chronicles gay community from 1920 to 1970. WGBH TV, Chan. 2. 9-10:30PM.

21 sunday

Cambridge — Amethyst Women Solstice celebration. YWCA, 7 Temple St. 3-6PM. \$4 more/less. Drug- and alcohol-free event for women. Sorry no childcare.

Boston — Gay Community Caroling. Arlington St. Church, 7PM. Spaghetti Dinner, 9PM. \$5. Info: Jim, 437-5870 or Dignity, 536-6518.

23 tuesday

Boston — "Say It Sister," progressive trivia with Jennifer Abod. WMBR 88.1 FM. 7-8PM.

25 thursday

Brookline — Am Tikva dairy/veggie potluck brunch and discussion: "Being Jewish at Xmas time." Workman's Circle, 1762 Beacon St. Non-gay friends welcome. Info: 782-8894.

Dona Herlinda and Her Son.

Written and directed by Jaime Humberto Hermosillo. With Arturo Maza, Marco Antonio Trevino, Leticia Lupersio, Guadalupe Del Toro, Guillermmina Alba. Running time 90 mins. At the USA Copley, Boston

Halfway through *Dona Herlinda and Her Son*, Billy (Guillermmina Alba), a music student, is telling her friend Ramon (Arturo Meza) a joke: Frankenstein and Dracula are having dinner together and Frankenstein compliments Dracula on the thick, red, homemade soup; when he asks for the recipe, the Count replies that it is a difficult one to repeat because you only have one mother. A pretty lame joke, but it carries resonance in the film: in the world of *Dona Herlinda and Her Son*, it is the mothers who eat their offspring.

Ramon, also a music student, is having an affair with Rodolfo (Marco Antonio Trevino), an up-and-coming pediatric neurosurgeon. They spend their time meeting in Ramon's boarding house, and the rest of it lunching and socializing with Rodolfo's mother, the ubiquitous Dona Herlinda (Guadalupe Del Toro). Herlinda doesn't seem to mind her son's affair — she seems as accommodating as she is oblivious to the sexual component, and she enjoys having her son's company as well as his boyfriend's. So much so that she insists that Ramon move in with her and her son. But motherlove only goes so far and soon she is setting Rodolfo up with Olga (Leticia Lupersio), with a keen eye on marriage and grandchildren.

Dona Herlinda and Her Son is a genteel bourgeois comedy of manners. Its main premise is that by being nice and accomodating, you can get whatever you want. But underneath its smiling social satire, is a fairly vicious view of maternal devotion and the lengths that everyone will go through to support the existing sexual status quo. *Dona Herlinda* is the flip side of *Stella Dallas* and *Mildred Pierce*. Mothers here do not have to sacrifice anything to keep and maintain the love of their children: that is a cultural given. The humor — and the tension — in the situation is how *la madre* can manipulate that devotion into getting her own way and making everyone else bow to her will.

Even at 90 minutes, *Dona Herlinda* seems a bit long. The plot is really just a variation on one theme — the emotional cannibalism of the devoted mother. If there is a single overriding metaphor in the film, it is the constant consuming of food; the constant gobbling of other people's emotional sustenance. What makes the film work so well are the performances. Guadalupe Del Toro is wonderful as Herlinda. Dressed in lovely, tasteful clothes, she wends her way through the film making delicate suggestions and exerting her influence through innuendo and affection. Arturo Maza and Marco Antonio Trevino as Ramon and Rodolfo, are both attractive and believable puppets. Trevino is especially good as the boy/man whose room is filled with tinker toys and *Road Warrior* posters — the perfect son whose manhood is only completed by his connection with his mother.

There is nothing incredibly exciting about *Dona Herlinda and Her Son* but it is pleasant and effective. The film's view of all sexuality is very positive — there are lots of sex scenes and nudity between men — and the criticisms that it makes of motherlove, machismo, and matrimony are pointed but gentle.

— Michael Bronski

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